

# WX may look at feasibility of UTOPIA

Melinda Williams 20.SEP.07

WOODS CROSS — Woods Cross may jump on the UTOPIA bandwagon.

At least council members on Tuesday agreed to look at the possibility of authorizing a feasibility study. UTOPIA, the Utah Telecommunication Open Infrastructure Agency, is a consortium of Utah cities engaged in deploying and operating a fiber optic network to every business and household in its member communities, of which there are 14, including Centerville and Layton.

It wasn't just UTOPIA spokesperson David Shaw's presentation, which caused the council to consider the feasibility study, but the endorsement of several people attending Tuesday's council meeting, including a former council member and a couple of businessmen.

Local businessman Bill Harten said current Internet capability provided in Woods Cross is not sufficient for his work, and he's had to work with out-of-state providers at a high cost.

He said the fiber-optic technology offered through UTOPIA would make it easier and faster to operate his business, and he warned council members that if they don't go with UTOPIA, businesses will leave Woods Cross for Centerville, which is currently installing it.

Former council member Thad Van Ry agreed, saying he has always been in favor of UTOPIA.

And Wes Johnson, general manager of Menlove Toyota, who was attending the meeting on another matter said it sounded like the fiber optic technology would make his business run smoother, and that his employees could be more productive if they had UTOPIA.

Shaw told council members that UTOPIA is funded through municipally-backed bonds, but that a pledge of revenue to help retire bond debt in the event that revenues are insufficient is asked of participating cities. That pledge is based on the city's population.

He couldn't give council members an amount for Woods Cross' obligation, but said that Murray City's obligation is \$1.2 million with a population of 45,000.

Woods Cross has about 9,000 residents and 2,600 homes.

Shaw said UTOPIA was "by far the most advanced network in the western hemisphere and the largest in North America."

He said with UTOPIA Internet users could download a music file in five seconds, rather than the three minutes or more it takes with regular broadband.

To a question, Shaw said such a system could be used to notify residents of an emergency. And, he said utilities like Rocky Mountain power could better track usage of electricity.